

Fear of Crime: The Causes, Consequences, and Solutions

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

Fear of crime is a chronic condition that impacts every aspect of an individual's life. It is different for every all individuals and will impact them in different ways. It comes from several different sources, a main source being television. There are many consequences of fear of crime; it can cause increased crime, negative economic consequences, negative physical effects on the body such as brain damage, and negative emotional effects such as depression. This paper concludes with possible solutions to the problem as well as with future research questions.

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Process Analysis

The whole idea of writing a thesis was overwhelming. I knew coming in my freshman year that I would eventually have to write the dreaded paper, but I avoided thinking about it. I figured I had time and that it would work out. Then, life happened and my thesis came flying at me much sooner than expected. I got married my sophomore year and found out at the beginning of my junior year that my husband and I would be moving across the world to Guam. Panic set in as I realized I had to write a thesis the next semester. I had not even thought about the thesis, let alone opened up the thesis guide to see what all I would have to do. So, I spent the first half of my junior fall semester dreading life and not knowing what I was interested in enough to research and write about. I was running out of time and had gotten nowhere, when an email arrived. It stated that there would be an in-class version of the thesis. This lit the fire in me and I knew that I needed to be in this class. This class seemed made for me. I wrote up all the answers to the questions and submitted it, hoping and praying that I would be accepted into the class. As time went by with no answer as to whether I was in the class or not, I figured I should start trying to do the thesis on my own. That did not work and I realized just how lost and confused I was on the whole process. Finally, about a day before I made my schedule for spring of junior year, I got the email I had been waiting for. I was in the class. I thought this would light the fire under my butt and get me motivated to start working, but it did not. If anything, this made me worry less and think less about the thesis. I had so many things going on that I put the thesis to the back of my mind and did not think about it until the end of winter break.

Suddenly, winter break was ending and I panicked, thinking I needed to have done something. I emailed my advisor in a near panic but was assured that I was fine. Cue me going right back to not thinking about the thesis. Class started and I still did not have a clear topic idea.

The first couple days were spent nailing our topics down and preparing the thesis proposal. I kept trying to determine what I like to do or what I find interesting, because surely, I thought, that something would make a good paper. I thought about the things I cared about, and yes, there were causes that I support and organizations that I love, but nothing that I had a burning passion for. Finally, I decided I was going to do something with *Criminal Minds*; it is a great show and I spend a lot of time watching it, so I figured it would be great. I was going to knock this thesis out of the park. So, I now had a topic that I wanted to write about but I still had no idea how I was going to turn that into a well thought out thesis. I struggled for a few days before deciding to ask one of my criminal justice professors for help. He gave me a list of topics to look into and my research began. I still was having very little luck in deciding what I wanted to do, but my proposal was due in class in a day or two. I picked a topic, slightly at random, and decided that I was going with it.

I now had a solid topic, *Criminal Minds* and fear of crime. I felt on top of the world and I suddenly had all of these ideas of how I could write the paper and how I would make it interesting. And I was motivated. Now I had to write the proposal. It was very difficult as there are not clear guidelines of how to set it up. There are just a few questions that I had to answer and that was it. This was really frustrating for me because I like, and need, structure. That was part of why I needed in the thesis class so badly. After stumbling through writing the proposal and questioning, multiple times, how I should lay it out, I finally had the proposal done. In class, we peer-edited our proposals and pointed out some things that may not work or may need to be re-worded. This was especially beneficial because it meant that other people could give me feedback and I could rethink whether my project would truly work or not. Eventually, I had a final proposal ready and I needed to have my thesis appointment.

The idea of a thesis meeting terrified me. I am not an outgoing person and I really do not like going and talking to people I do not know. I did not know what to expect so I went in, hands shaking because of nerves, and away it went. During the meeting, I realized that maybe some of my ideas had flaws in them, but I put on a brave front and acted like I knew exactly what I was doing. After stumbling through the meeting, my idea was approved, meaning I could start working. The problem was that coming out of the meeting, I felt less confident about my project than I had when I went in. I struggled with what to do because I did not think my idea would be good when I made the few changes I felt I needed to make. My advisor and I talked and I decided to keep *Criminal Minds* and fear of crime as my topic.

Now that I had a topic, I needed to make a schedule of when to do things. I laid out exactly what I wanted to do, in detail. During this process, I realized just how much I needed to research and the exact topics that I would need information on. This was really difficult for me because I do not normally plan things out like this. I normally just go with it and research as I write. The schedule also made me realize that I did not have as much time as I thought I did. I would have to do a lot of work each week in order to stay on schedule and not fall behind my deadlines.

It was finally time to start the research and I started off great. I followed my schedule and found the information I needed. The problem I encountered, is that this only worked for a week. Then I completely stopped working on my thesis. Life got in the way and I had other pressing things that needed done first. I procrastinated for another couple of weeks, doing just the bare minimum to get by. I was mad at myself for doing this, but I was so busy and consumed with other things, that it did not change. I really struggled finding the motivation to do the research. I liked the topic but just did not want to do it. Eventually I realized that I needed to start writing,

so I spent an entire Saturday researching and getting articles that I needed. This is where I hit another roadblock. I could not find specific information on *Criminal Minds* that I wanted for my paper. This was frustrating and caused me to quit for the day. I tried looking for other information and kept coming up short. I simply could not find what I wanted. I came to class annoyed and discouraged and told my advisor that I was changing my whole idea because what I was doing was not working. My project would now focus on every aspect of fear of crime, its negative effects, and what future researchers could look at to try to stop fear of crime. With renewed energy I started researching again. I did not have all of my research done but the deadline for my rough draft of my thesis was approaching so I had to jump right in with the writing.

I had a solid base of information from articles gathered, but I knew I would need more. I did not really care though. I wanted to jump into the writing because I knew I needed to get it done. I started writing and it was going pretty well. I would write until I had a gap in information and would then search for an article and information to fill the gap. This process worked much better for me than trying to just research everything first. I did not have a clear direction when I started writing; I just went with it and let the research determine the direction of the paper. I was actually really pleased with how this was going, and with this new, more free flowing way of writing I was actually learning more. I began to enjoy the writing process, while also stressing at the same time because this paper was due soon. I did not write in order either, I skipped around the paper and then would fill in the blank sections later. I realize that I do not think in a straight line and I get distracted very easy. I would be writing one section and have a thought on something else, so I would go back and forth. This probably was not the most efficient method but it is what I found worked for me. After the rough draft was finally finished, I was in the

home stretch. It felt as though a weight had been lifted off of me. I knew there was only a little bit more to do on my thesis and then I could ring the bell.

To finish the process out, I had to write this process analysis and write the front matter for the paper. The process analysis seemed very daunting. I read and reread the 'instructions' for the process analysis and my frustration grew. I wanted to be done. I did not want to write about what I did. I wanted people just to read my paper and be done with it. I talked to my advisor multiple times about the process analysis because it was just too vague for my liking. Finally, I decided I would start at the beginning and go to the end of my whole journey, and what a journey it has been.

This whole process was honestly a big hot mess, mainly due to my severe procrastination and my hatred of vague instructions. I struggled to start the whole project and to pick a topic. I think that through this process I have learned what not to do when faced with large projects. I have always procrastinated everything because I work best under large amounts of stress. If I do not feel stressed, I simply cannot focus or stay on task. This is something that I tried to change during this process, but I still needed the stress to push me through. I also learned that, while I like structure and specific instructions, I write best when I am not rigid in the form that my writing will take. When I adopted the more free idea of writing, the writing flowed much better and the sentences were better constructed. I turned my paper in to my advisor for editing and revisions and I told him that I just wrote and I honestly did not know if I went off topic or on a tangent because I was just writing. I was really concerned that he would tell me the paper was horrible or that it made absolutely no sense, but he said it was actually pretty good and just to add examples and fix a few other things. That was a wonderful feeling and made me realize that I did not really learn much from the research itself. I really started learning and absorbing

information when I was writing. I had to combine the many different ideas that I had read about and use it for my own purpose. I was also able to see how all of the theories that I was learning in my criminology class could be applied to many other things. This project really helped deepen my understanding of all that I have been learning and it affirmed my choice that I want to do something in the criminology field.

This project is probably most meaningful for me because it helped solidify my future goals. However, I think it can help anyone who reads it better understand how we are influenced by media, specifically the television, and how fear of crime causes many negative outcomes. I also had the intention of this project being used by other researchers to gain ideas of how to further research on fear of crime. All in all, I want this project to be used to educate others because that is its purpose and that is how it can be most beneficial to others.

Introduction

People fear many things. There is acrophobia, the fear of heights. There is arachnophobia, the fear of spiders. Hydrophobia, anthropophobia, apiphobia, and many more are all real fears that people must learn to live and cope with (2018 Oxford University Press). To treat these fears people do a number of different things. One way to treat an extreme fear, a phobia, is to see a therapist who helps them reshape how they think about the object of their fear. They can also do exposure therapy; this is where individuals are very gradually introduced to their fears to help them cope with them and not feel as anxious (A. Moore 2012). In other cases, doctors will sometimes provide medication to lower the anxiety people feel from their specific fear. However, an important fear that is not discussed nearly enough, is the fear of crime.

Fear of crime can originate from different factors but a major one comes from tv shows and the crime shown within them. A study funded by ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox in 1998, found that from 1994 to 1995 violence portrayed in television shows increased from 58% to 61%. Within prime time, the violent content of shows increased 14% (Mifflin 1998). Violence in television programs continues to increase, as well as crime shows being played on television. This is important to examine because of how much these shows can impact individuals and societies. Crime shows create fear of crime, which causes negative impacts on an individual level as well as at a community level. Fear of crime has many implications on society and stems a lot from media, specifically crime shows, and from individuals' peer groups. This paper argues that fear of crime is by and large, unfounded. I will discuss what fear of crime is, what causes it, how it affects us, why it is important to understand, and what future programs and research could be.

What is fear of crime?

In order to understand fear of crime, one first must understand what exactly fear, in general, is. For purposes of this paper, I will be analyzing the definition explained in the article “Causes and Consequences of Fear of Crime: The Impact of Fear of Crime on Behavioral Health Outcomes and Behavioral Health Treatments,” written by Erin Grinshteyn (2013). Generally speaking, fear of crime is defined as a fearful perception, by an individual or a society, that crime will occur to them, even though this is not backed by actual statistics or probabilities. To understand this definition of fear of crime and how it fits in context to fear on crime shows, there first needs to be an understanding of fear.

Fear is a psychological and emotional response, within the body, to some event. This natural response alerts a person to a potential danger and it allows the person to prepare to combat or flee from the danger (Grinshteyn, 2013). This physical response within the body is very helpful because it can trigger the fight or flight response which allows people to choose how to handle the threat. This is great for short-term fears like seeing a big dog charging at you because this event occurs and then it is over rather quickly. But this fear response is not meant for long-term threats or stressors, which is what fear of crime is (Grinshteyn, 2013). Individuals who fear crime, experience it at all times, making it a chronic condition.

There is a perception that crime will occur to an individual, but this is not based on scientific factors. The person simply fears all crime, or specific types of crime, based on different symbols that the person identifies with crime (Grinshteyn, 2013). The fear these individual experience is unresolved because the stressors that cause the person’s fear do not go away (Grinshteyn, 2013). They linger constantly in the back of the individual’s mind and cause a person to be filled with fear and dread.

Individuals may have many symbols that they associate with crime. The problem is that people cannot determine whether they will see these symbols in different places or not; they cannot control the external environment. According to Grinshteyn (2013), fear of crime can be broadly described as, “an emotional response of dread or anxiety to crime or symbols that a person associates with crime” (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.25). Some people feel more fear that specific types of crime will occur to them. One person may be extremely fearful of being robbed, so his or her symbols will relate to objects that could be used in a robbery. Other individuals may have fear about violent crimes, such as murder or rape.

Risk of actual victimization is commonly used to model fear, the problem is that people are very bad at determining real risk of crime (Grinshteyn, 2013). Risk should be based on the prevalence of the crime that individuals fear, the likelihood that the crime will occur to the individuals, the vulnerability that the individuals have, and the consequences that the individuals will undergo if the crime they fear occurs to them (Garofalo, 1981, p.845). Garofalo (1981) explains that these four things that risk is modeled on, are not always consciously thought out, but are often simply a part of the fear-response (Garofalo, 1981, p.845). True risk and peoples' fear are often not expressly related. Individuals who have a tendency to fear crime more, namely women and the elderly, often are the least at risk because they engage in less risky behaviors. In fact, younger individuals tend to be most at risk because they are involved in crime and they display antisocial behavior, both of which are factors that lead to victimization (Lloyd, 2005). These individuals are the youth. There is a limitation in this statement though, because the lower risk could be correlated to the individuals behaving more cautiously due to their fear (Grinshteyn, 2013). Juveniles tend to be worse at estimating fear. Their inexperience in life and the fact that they are still developing emotionally can cause these younger individuals to

underestimate or overestimate their personal risk of crime (Grinshteyn, 2013). It is important to understand the discrepancy between fear of crime and actual risk because the causes of fear impact how people in society function and interact with one another.

Where does fear of crime come from?

Fear is a normal reaction that individuals experience. It protects individuals when they are actually in dangerous situations. While fear of crime differs slightly and does not always originate from a dangerous situation, it can still be determined by looking at a number of different factors that have been found to contribute to individuals' fear. Wesley Skogan states that the five contributing categories are actual criminal victimization, second-hand information about criminal victimization distributed through social networks, physical deterioration and social deterioration, the characteristics of the built environment, and group conflict (Moore, 1988, p. 3). This type of fear is developed through individuals' life experiences, the people they interact with, and through the types of media and television that they consume.

When people have direct experiences with a crime, such as being a victim of a crime, this can be a cause to their fear towards crime. This experience of crime is a type of learning, which Hansen (2000) describes as being "equated to a change in behavior," meaning that when you learn, you will begin to do something different (Hansen, 2000, p.23). So, experiences shape individuals' perceptions of different things and cause a change in these individuals. A person who has already been robbed once before will feel more fearful toward that specific type of crime and is likely to take extra measures to ensure it does not happen again. This person has learned, and thus has changed his or her behavior. The more direct experience that individuals gain, the even more fearful they will become and the more their behavior will change. Individuals do not want to be victims of crime, so they quickly learn and adapt.

There are other ways that people gain their fear of crime. Akers' Social Learning Theory is one such way. According to this theory, crime is learned through the combination of differential association, differential reinforcement, criminal definitions, and imitation (J. Intravia, Advanced Criminology lecture, March 16, 2018). Social learning theory is usually used to explain what brings individuals to commit crime, but it can explain any learned behavior of individuals. The first aspect of Akers' theory posits that differential associations are the interactions and definitions, either favorable or unfavorable, toward crime, which an individual learns from their closest groups like friends and families. In simpler terms, differential association is about the beliefs of the people one interacts with. Concerning fear of crime, if the groups that individuals spend the most time with are fearful of crime and have strong beliefs about it, then the individual is likely to adopt the same fear. The second aspect, differential reinforcement, is about the expected rewards or consequences of a certain behavior. With fear of crime these rewards and punishments are the individuals' personal expected gain by acting in a certain way. An example, is that by staying at home instead of going to the park, the individual gains a feeling of safety and is not receiving possible negative impacts of being a victim of crime. When individuals change their behavior by staying at home and this does not render them a victim of crime, then this reinforces their belief about their fear of crime. The third aspect is the definitions which are the individuals' personal attitudes and meanings that they give to behavior and events. There are general and specific definitions. General definitions are things like moral or religious definitions. For example, committing crime is bad. Specific definitions are things more oriented towards specific acts, such as, killing a man is bad. The fourth aspect, is imitation. Individuals can learn fear through imitating what they see their families or peers doing. Children raised with parents who have multiple locks on the doors, who do not leave the house after dark,

or who do not allow their children to watch violent shows or scary movies, will probably have more fear than children who are raised with less fearful parents. Figure 1.1 shows the causal diagram of social learning theory as described previously.

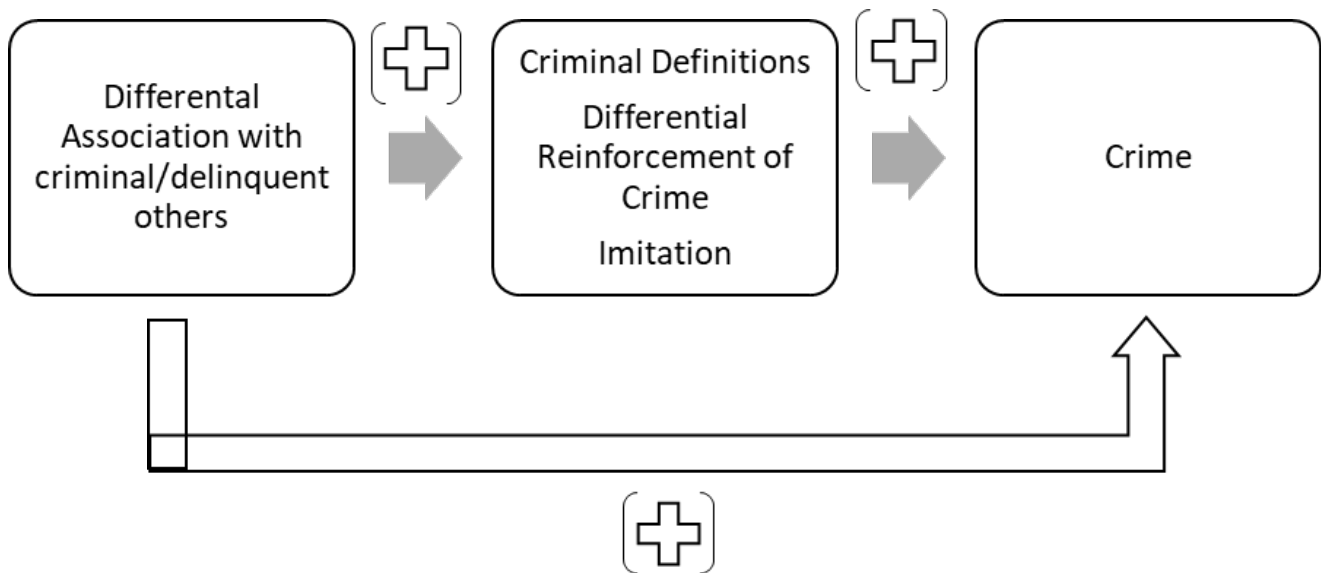


Figure 1.1- This figure shows the relationship between crime and how individuals learn it. The diagram also explains how individuals can learn fear because the concepts of this model can be applied to any learned behavior.

Experience and peer and family groups play a large role in developing an individual's fear of crime, but another important component is media and television. The idea of the influence of the media is called Cultivation Theory, developed by George Gerbner. The theory has five key components:

1. Because television content is mass produced and occupies a central role in American culture, it is more influential than other forms of mass media.
2. TV does not cause or encourage violent behavior. Instead it shapes people's attitudes and beliefs about society and other people.
3. TV cultivates values and attitudes already present in the culture. It serves to reinforce the status quo, not challenge it.
4. Viewing more than four hours of television a day can lead to Mean World Syndrome.
5. Television does not reflect reality, rather, it creates an alternate reality. (p. 2)

The theory clearly states that television is the most influential form of media. This is logical because most people have a television and are able to view the news or crime shows of some sort. Individuals who spend long periods of time watching television are more likely to develop a fear of crime due to the amount of crime and violence shown on television. While television does not encourage violent behavior, it does shape attitudes and beliefs about other individuals and society, and will thus shape how people view crime ("Cultivation Theory"). Also, television and the media play on what they think the public wants to see. In this manner, they are not creating new values or attitudes, they are simply enforcing the ones that the public has already set in place and agreed upon.

Crime shows are usually divided into at least two categories. The most common are dramas and nonfiction shows. According to Stephanie Pappas, people who tend to be afraid of crime, enjoy, or are drawn to in some manner, nonfiction crime shows. Watching these shows, she says, simply reinforces the fears these individuals already have (Pappas, 2011). Other people tend to be drawn to the crime dramas, such as *Criminal Minds*. Both show very serious violent crime, but nonfiction crime shows tend to include more realism and nonfictional pictures of the

events. Along with this, nonfictional programs show actual interviews with victims and their families. These can add to fear of crime because the interviews are often for dramatic effect (Kort-Butler, 2011, p.51). While dramas and nonfiction shows are not the only things on television that portray crime and violence, they are the most influential in shaping individual levels of fear of crime.

How does fear of crime affect us?

Fear of crime has two primary effects. It changes how individuals think about crime and it can distort perceptions of true crime rates. FYI Living states that, “Most people in society do not have direct experience with crime,” which means that the media and television are highly influential in people’s fear of crime (FYI Living, 2011). Studies show that fear of crime differs based on the type of show the viewer watches. The study found that those who had more fear are the individuals who watch nonfictional crime shows, but those that watch crime dramas are more likely to support the death penalty (FYI Living, 2011). It is unknown whether watching television is the cause of this or not, but Kort-Butler states that the stories of good guys versus bad guys align with the support for capital punishment (Pappas, 2011). Something surprising that Moore mentions is that past victimization does not have that much effect on fear of crime. Moore (1988) states, “People who have heard about others’ victimizations are almost as fearful as those who have actually been victimized,” which further expresses the importance that media plays in the fear of crime. (Moore, 1988). Having a fear of crime is not an inherently bad thing; the problem is when individuals are so fearful that their thoughts and perceptions about crime become distorted and stray from facts.

The groups of individuals that are found to be the most fearful of crime tend to be women as a whole, even though they are the less often victimized than others, while the least fearful of

crime tend to be young men, even though they are the most often victimized (Moore, 1988). A study done by Katherine Stott examines the differences between the characteristics of victims shown on television and the characteristics of those who are actually victimized the most in real life. Stott found that what crime dramas show as the usual victims are rarely accurate (Stott, 2011). This helps explain why certain shows can cause people, who are not that often victimized, to feel more fear toward specific crimes. Also, because crime shows are created with the intent to make money, everything has to look a certain way and appeal to a certain demographic (Stott, 2011). Again, this further enhances fear of crime because these shows are not accurate. They are showing mostly attractive, middle-class, Caucasian women being brutally raped or murdered over and over (Stott, 2011). While women are the most frequent victims of sexual assault crimes, the Uniform Crime Report from 2016 states that there were 5,237,106 reported criminal incidents in 2016. Of this total, only 78,088 were sex offenses (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2016). This means that only 1.5% of crimes were actually sex crimes. The over exposure of sexual related crimes on television and the fact that most sexual related crimes are against females, causes increased fear of crime.

Besides making specific demographics fearful, crime shows play a role in increasing fear of specific crimes. For example, *Criminal Minds* shows almost exclusively rapes and murders. An avid viewer of the show would likely develop an aversion and increased fear of those specific crimes due to seeing them constantly. Another aspect, is that watching crime dramas or nonfictional crime shows can cause individuals to feel like the police are not doing their job. This causes them to either seclude themselves or change other behaviors, such as the routes they use to get home or the stores they shop at. Fear not only changes individuals' thoughts about

crime and perceptions of who crime victimizes, but it also affects them in a physical manner. For example, it can affect their health or their finances.

Why is it important to understand fear of crime and the impact of crime shows?

Fear of crime affects how individuals and society think about crime. It changes perceptions on crime and the criminal justice system, largely due to the overexposure of violent crimes in shows on television. Along with the change in thoughts about crime itself, there are many important consequences of this fear. Understanding the consequences of this fear can be the first step in determining how to alleviate part of the fear that individuals or societies may feel. These are the levels of crime, the economy, the physical-state of people, and the mental-state of people.

Increased Crime and Increased Fear of Crime

Fear of crime can cause more crime to occur, which in turn creates more fear of crime. This idea is based on the Broken Windows Theory developed by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling. The theory states that a broken window, or some other sign of brokenness or disarray, if left unattended, has the ability to foster further disorder. Social disorder in neighborhoods leads to increased criminal activity. Wilson and Kelling associate a broken window as a symbol for all different types of disorder, such as social or physical, that a neighborhood may experience (Doran, 2012, p.11). Physical disorder is things like trash on the ground, graffiti on buildings, abandoned cars, and needles or syringes on the ground. Social disorder is things like public intoxication, prostitutes on the streets or sidewalks, groups of people that have indicators of gang affiliation on the streets or sidewalks, and adults fighting or arguing in public. The idea of the theory is that if individuals see a broken window that is left unrepaired, it is a sign that no one in

the community cares. This is the starting point of the breakdown of informal social controls. These controls include things such as bystander intervention and neighbors simply keeping watch of their neighborhood. Because there is not a response to fix the broken window, or whatever the type of disorder may be, delinquents and criminals will see this as a sign that no one will stop them for furthering the damage (Doran, 2012, p.11). Social and physical disorder thrive in these conditions. Other individuals and residents of the area see these identifiers of crime and the lack of social controls causes them to further fear crime. This fear leads residents to change their behaviors in order to avoid the areas that they feel are uncontrolled and unsafe. They withdraw from their society because of a lack of trust and cohesion. By avoiding these areas, the residents are giving up the power they have to provide mutual support and cohesion within the neighborhood (Doran, 2012, p.12). If residents are avoiding these areas, they are then unable to monitor or help fix the problem. This leaves the disorder and criminal behavior unchecked, which leads to increased levels of crime and thus increased fear of crime. It remains a continuous cycle until someone or something steps in to address the issue. Figure 1.2 shows the relationship between a broken window, or other sign of disorder, and fear of crime (Doran, 2012, p.12).

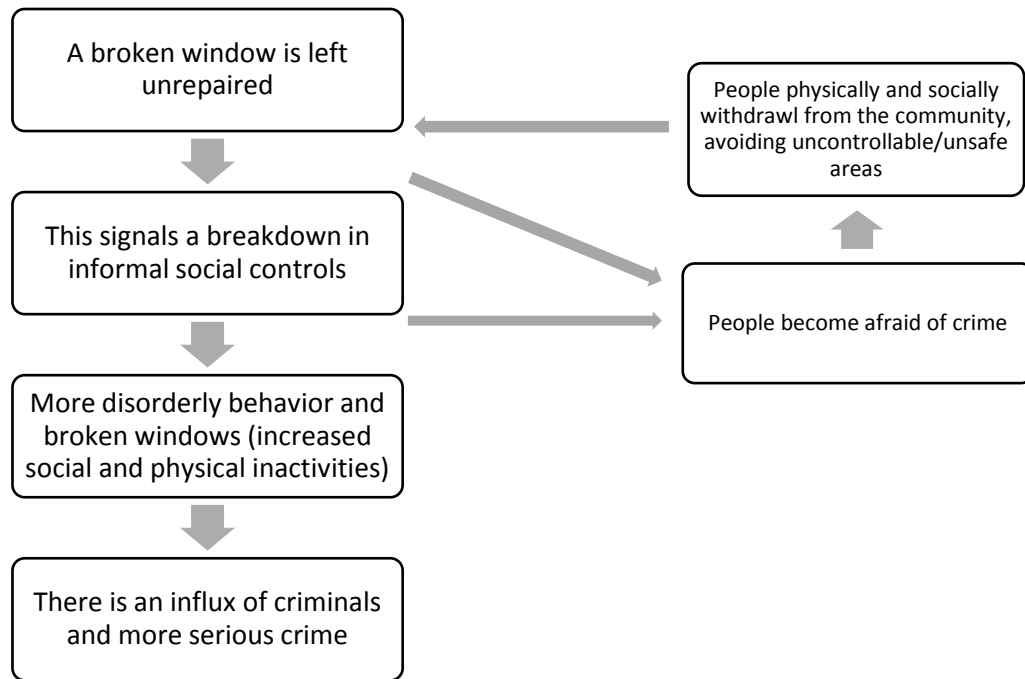


Figure 1.2 Broken Windows Theory Causal Diagram- This model explains the relationship between signs of disorder, fear of crime, and crime.

Economic Impact from Fear of Crime

Along with withdrawal from society, fear of crime also has negative economic consequences. It is difficult to completely predict economic loss based on fear of crime, but there are generalizations and patterns that have been observed by other researchers that give an idea of how fear of crime can impact the economy. Potential economic impacts are seen in businesses, the housing market, tourism, personal finances, and the government.

When individuals are fearful and withdraw from society, they do not go out and spend money. They do not go to stores, restaurants, or other commercial places that they deem unsafe. This results in a loss of revenue for businesses in these areas perceived as unsafe (Doran, 2012, p.16). Businesses that are near places of disorder will have less customers because disorder deters people from going to these places, especially when alone.

Also, when too much fear and disorder have accumulated in one place, individuals feel inclined to move away from their current homes. Doran stated that fear of crime negatively impacts the housing market due to residential mobility out of the neighborhood and negative attitudes from potential homebuyers. When people avoid retail shops and avoid leaving their homes in general, many shops are forced to close due to a lack of revenue (Doran, 2012, p.16). This allows more disorder to occur, which increases crime and fear of crime, and eventually causes people to move out of these areas. The most wealthy residents leave the area first, which is an economic blow in itself because their departure indicates that less money will be invested in the area which means less revenue for the remaining stores (Doran, 2012, p.16). With the loss of the most affluent individuals in the neighborhood, many other residents will begin to relocate as well. This hurts the housing market, because people do not want to buy homes in neighborhoods with high residential mobility or in places where there are high perceptions of crime. As more individuals in these neighborhoods watch crime shows and become more fearful, and as they see disorder occurring and become more fearful, then they will want to sell their home and move. The negative impact of this is that they would be willing to sell at a lower price than their home is worth, simply to move from the area. This lowers the value of the other homes in the area, thus hurting the housing market.

Fear of crime not only affects residents of the area but it also affects tourists as well. Tourists look at residents' fear of crime as well as their own fear of crime to determine whether a destination is worth the risk or not. Doran mentions how there is a fear of crime in Mexico for American tourists and gives the example that if Americans were to actually react to this fear of crime by going to a different location, then the tourism industry in Mexico would experience a decrease in revenues (Doran, 2012, p.17). Crime shows portray certain places as more dangerous and this causes adverse reactions in individuals. These individuals no longer want to visit these places, like Mexico, because they fear what could happen to them there, such as being taken as a part of human trafficking. When individuals do not feel that their safety can be absolutely guaranteed in the place that they are travelling, then this fear could deter them from travelling here. This decline in tourism can potentially cause economic declines for countries that rely on tourism as a primary source of revenue.

A new priority that can arise from fear of crime is security. Security comes in many different forms and is not always cheap. For example, those who are especially fearful will likely spend great amounts of their money on security. Some things that individuals may invest in are increased outside lighting for their homes, fences or other structures to protect the home, a guard dog, a home alarm, weapons, and cameras (Doran, 2012, p.17-18). Also, if the individual is especially fearful of something being broken or stolen, they can buy more insurance (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.31). The cost of these are directly on the individual. While these purchases may help certain industries in the economy, it leaves individuals with less money at their disposal. Another way in which individuals may experience financial loss is a loss of wages due to their fear. For example, fear of crime can cause extreme aversion to being out after dark. Because of this, individuals begin leaving work earlier in order to be home before dark. Leaving early results in

lower wages because it is less hours worked (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.31). While individuals have less money when they buy security, it is not necessarily a bad thing because the security measures are more important than the actual cash.

Another institution that spends a lot of money on security and security programs is the government. The government is tasked with attempting to reduce overall fear of crime in order to alleviate many of these issues. These programs are not cheap. In Britain, for example, the government invested \$122 million into CCTV surveillance systems at the central and local levels in 1994 and 1997 (Doran, 2012, p.18). Any program that the government creates is going to be expensive simply due to the vast size that programs need to be. Even local projects are expensive because they are for whole city or counties. Besides starting programs or installing security cameras, the government also incurs the cost of adding additional police officers to the field to combat fear of crime (Doran, 2012, p.18). This helps with fear of crime, because a larger presence of police officers can help residents feel more protected and safer. Finally, the government is also responsible for the upkeep of anything they install and any programs that they start (Doran, 2012, p.18).

Physical Effects on the Body

Physical health is an issue that everyone has to deal with, but fear of crime can cause deteriorated health in individuals who experience it. There are both direct consequences of the fear as well as consequences due to changed behavior. The two largest consequences are due to long-term stress and decreased physical activity.

The human body is a complex system that is made to function in a very specific way. There can be devastating effects when the body is not functioning properly. Some of these negative effects can be caused by the stress response due to fear of crime. Long-term fear causes

long-term stress. This is not typical everyday stress, like needing to clean the house, do the laundry, and cook dinner all before having company over. This is a chronic stress that negatively affects the body. When individuals experience stress, the nervous system releases hormones to produce more white blood cells. It does this in order to prepare the body and immune system for minor injuries and other short-term illnesses (Mills, 2008). Grinshteyn states that some things that individuals experience when this stress response is triggered are, “sweating, shortness of breath, quickening of the heart rate, and trembling in the short term” (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.26). These things are not bad for short-term incidents; they are actually helpful and necessary for the proper functioning of the immune system in these situations (Mills, 2008). The problem with the stress response is when the stress is chronic and long-term because then the body begins experiencing a suppressed immune system, thus making it harder to fight off illnesses (Mills, 2008). Mills states that psoriasis, lupus, Crohn’s disease, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and other autoimmune disorders may flare up or develop due to chronic stress (Mills, 2008). Other consequences of long-term stress can include musculoskeletal problems like osteoporosis, problems reproducing, depression, cardiovascular damage, and brain damage (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.26).

Stress is not the only consequence of fear, there are also behavioral health consequences due to fear of crime and withdrawal from society. The biggest concern in regard to behavioral health consequences is the decrease in physical activity that individuals experience due to their fear of crime. Research shows connections between obesity and fear of crime (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.29). When individuals fear crime, they withdraw and retreat to places they feel safe, like their home. They do not wish to leave their homes which means much of their time is spent sitting around the house not doing much of anything. They are not very likely to go to the park, on a

walk, or go to a gym (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.28). Because these individuals are not out exercising and getting fresh air, they are not receiving the proper exercise that they need which can lead to obesity. From here, obesity can cause back pain, heart disease, colon cancer, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and a shorter life expectancy (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.29).

Emotional Effects

In addition to physical effects on the body, individuals can experience different emotional effects due to their fear of crime. Physical affects are easier seen, but emotional effects are just as important. If individuals are afraid of crime and seclude themselves at home, they are missing out on human interaction which helps with a variety of different things. Human interaction keeps social ties strong and positive and it allows neighborhoods to remain socially cohesive, meaning everyone will look out for each other and keep the best interest of the neighborhood and others in mind. When individuals experience fear they become secluded and lose their social ties (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.27). This can lead to depression and anxiety, both of which cause the individual to feel even more isolated from society. Grinshteyn states that individuals in the top percentile that experienced fear of crime were 90% more likely to experience depression (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.27). Along with these illnesses, individuals who suffer from fear of crime and seclude themselves, also have decreased functioning in their cognitive processes that allow them to carry out simple or complex tasks and to learn new things (Grinshteyn, 2013, p.27). Individuals may also experience negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration, and dread. All of these feelings can be very debilitating in terms of daily functioning.

Conclusion: What can future researchers do?

Fear of crime is a multifaceted problem that causes a variety of negative consequences. This fear develops from watching crime portrayed on TV. Crime shows will continue to be

shown on television, and they will continue to show increasingly more violent scenes of crimes. Because of this, it is important that individuals are able to address their fear and know what causes it. It is only through knowing and acknowledging the fear, which an individual can work towards overcoming it.

There are still ways that the criminal justice system, policy makers, and researchers can help reduce fear of crime though. It seems logical that by focusing on fixing real crime and lowering real crime, people will be less fearful of crime. But the reality is that this may not be entirely true. The fear of crime comes from individuals' perceptions of the risk of a crime occurring to them. These perceptions are not completely logical and do not align with true crime victimization. They do not line up with real risk that a person has. In order to lower fear of crime, society will need more than policies that simply lower crime rate. One of the first things that can be done is to stop asking whether an individual's fear of crime is rational or not because the rationality of the individuals fear is not the problem. Fear does not have to be rational and having a discussion about the rationality of individuals' fear is dismissing why they feel that way to begin with. The issue is that individuals and societies are experiencing fear of crime and withdrawing from society, thus leading to negative outcomes. The solution to the irrationality of fear is looking at why certain groups or individuals experience fear of crime and then finding a way to stop it (Garofalo, 1981, p.854). Programs can be implemented to help those who suffer from fear of crime by discussing their fears, what causes them, and ways to understand why they are fearful. One solution is for individuals to go and talk to a therapist, but this may not be a viable solution. For example, individuals that are recommended to talk to a therapist may not actually want to talk to the therapist or may feel uncomfortable discussing their fears. Some individuals may find this to be a helpful solution, but there are many people who do not like

sharing their personal lives with others, including trained professionals. So while therapy can help, it is not a viable solution for the problem as a whole. A different recommendation could be stopping watching crime shows. This may or may not lower individuals' fear of crime, but it should prevent their fear from getting worse. Another possible solution includes future research to find a program or project that will help to combat fear of crime.

Every new connection learned about fear of crime and how individuals interpret it causes new research questions to arise: What type of information do individuals receive about crime and how does this vary across individuals? How do individuals' attitudes and beliefs affect how they perceive fear of crime? How do real risks of crime and individually perceived risks of crime relate? How can individuals be made more aware of the influence that crime shows and other forms of media have on them in regard to fear of crime? How big is the economic impact of fear of crime, both the good impacts and the bad? How much fear is too much before individuals begin to withdraw from society? How much fear can individuals still function under? How can the media help to alleviate some of the fear that it produces? How does how fearful individuals think they are compare to the actions of these individuals? Do they act more fearful than they think they are or vice versa? This list is not exhaustive of the possibilities of research topics that have come to light, because there are simply so many. Also, it would take many different research projects to answer these different questions, as one study is unable to accurately address each issue presented here. The idea is not to completely rid individuals of fear of crime, but to be sure that the fear is at a manageable level, and at a level that is not completely distorted from the facts and risk of victimization.

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